



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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DULWICH AND STREATHAM BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* (*pro tem*) Miss Woodman, Woodlawn, Dulwich. A meeting will be held on April 1st, when Dr. Schofield and Mrs. Franklin will speak.

CLAPHAM BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Miss E. Bloxam, 29, Northside, Clapham Common. A Reading Circle was held on March 4th, when the second chapter of "Home Education" was read and discussed. The Rector of Clapham presided. The next General Meeting will be held early in April, when Mr. Penfold will read a Paper on "The Hygiene of Children's Dentistry."

HIGHGATE AND CROUCH END BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Mrs. Ebbelwhite, 2, Ashmount Road, Hornsey Lane, N. On March 11th, a deeply interesting Paper was read by Mrs. Franklin, on "Educational Principles," Rev. A. E. Allcock, M.A., Head Master of Highgate School, in the chair.

READING BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Mr. W. Salmon, 54, London Street. The next meeting will be held on April 6th, when Mrs. J. Spencer Curwen will give an address "On the Application of Educational Principles to Pianoforte Teaching." The chair will be taken at 3 by Mr. J. C. B. Tirbutt, Mus. Bac., organist of All Saints' Church.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH.—*Hon. Secs.:* Mrs. Newton Coombe, Brocco Band, and Miss Walmsley, the High School. Mr. T. G. Rooper, H.M.I., being unable through illness to deliver his promised lecture, Miss Walmsley read a paper on "Kindergarten methods and principles." Much interest was aroused in the work of the Union, and several new members were enrolled.

FOLKESTONE BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Mrs. Herbert Baynes, 9, Christchurch Road. A meeting to inaugurate this branch was announced for March 26th; speakers, Rev. W. Hall and Mrs. Baynes.

SCARBOROUGH BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*—Mrs. G. Rowntree, 14, Valley Bridge. *Erratum:* Mrs. Bryant, "District Sec." should be D. Sc. in last month's *Parents' Review*. On February 14th a Paper was read by Mrs. Barker, written by Mr. C. Russell, on "Slöyd." Miss Andrés, of the Nääs School was with us and added to the paper by a most practical exposition of the value of Slöyd as an educational subject, and brought out the moral, mental, and physical advantages of such a training. There were exhibits on the table of wood and cardboard Slöyd, also of embossed leather work, and bent iron work. February 25th. Joint Lecture of the Teachers' Guild and P.N.E.U. Miss Mary Simpson, of Leeds, read a capital Paper, entitled, "Nature—our children's friend." Diagrams were thrown on the screen illustrating some special points in Botany. The paper was full of suggestions for Parents as well as Teachers. The chair was taken by R. H. Barker, Esq.

EDINBURGH BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Mrs. Berry Hart, 29, Charlotte Square. Owing to illness the meeting announced to be held here has been unavoidably postponed.

ABERDEEN BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.:* Mrs. Lawson, 43, Hamilton Place. An important public meeting has been held here, the report of which is unfortunately crowded out.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

BAD BRINGING UP.

BY T. G. ROOPER.

LET me commence by introducing to you an engaging child of five years, who accompanies his mamma to call on a friend. During the visit he permits no one in the room to have a moment's peace. For a time he leans listlessly against a chair or his mother's knee. Soon he begins to touch everything in the room within his reach, in spite of the repeated "Don't do that, my dear," and concludes a series of irritating interruptions with a yawn, and a drawling cry, "Let's go, mamma." Mamma replies: "In a minute, my pet; be good."

Seated at table, the harmony of the meal is upset without notice, by a howl from the small child, who either would like what he does not get, or is helped to a dish which he does not like. Mamma may be distressed, or she may be angry, but neither wrath nor sorrow prevents the small despot from being master of the situation. The contrast between the little one's real tenderness and feebleness, and his acquired power over his elders, without whose constant attention he is absolutely helpless, is most instructive, and to those who, like Puck, "love to see things turn out preposterously," not a little comic.

But our small friend, when at home, is apt to lord it over the domestics in a manner all his own, and the more because they themselves are half amused at his precocious

tyranny, and half inclined to acquiesce in it, as a part of the dispensation of things over which they have no control. The child knows that they are there to wait on him; he sees that they occupy a different part of the house, dine at a different table, and have different manners and habits. He lets the servants know that he knows this, in a manner that is sometimes, though of course unconsciously, quite heartless and cruel.

Yet, perhaps, the very contrast between the life upstairs and the life downstairs might be the readiest way of impressing on a young child the pleasure of taking thought for other people, and sympathising with their feelings. His own comforts, the well supplied table, the blazing fire, the curtained window, the cosy bed, the varied toys, each happy privilege of the child of well-to-do parents, may be made the means of awakening natural but latent sympathies. The small child will listen with interest if it is explained to him from time to time, as nurses often do explain, that while he has a new warm coat, many another little boy has to shiver in the cold for want of someone to provide him with such clothing; that while he has good food to make him grow big and strong, many another has to go hungry to bed, and to start for his work in the morning without breakfast. In this way a very young child can be made to feel that his comforts and pleasures are not the lot of all children, and that while he has more things than he knows how to value, others are without what they really need. In the absence of this kind of teaching the sense of selfishness, the natural, proper and life protecting tendency to think of self first, develops rapidly to a rank growth. Absence of training in consideration for others in early years is the root of peevishness, insolence, and ingratitude.

Let the child remember, as his head sinks in his soft pillow, that other children like himself are laying their heads on a truss of straw, and his happiness will be none the less that it will be a flower of three stalks bearing one joy, another sympathy and another the sense of gratitude to his parents and to God. You cannot learn to help others until you begin to feel that they want your help. Teach the child early that while he has all he requires, others are living in want and suffering, for, if this teaching be omitted, instead of gratitude

for what he has, he will only be jealous and envious on account of what he has not. He will not be content with what is given him, but will covet all nice things that he sees in the possession of other children, and will regard himself as most miserable because he cannot have everything he cries for. One of the earliest lessons which a young child must learn is the possibility of privation.

Let us pass over a few years and find our master Jack, at 10 years of age, grown so masterful that he is sent to a boarding school. Doubtless the discipline of school life soon puts an end to the so-called "nonsense" in him. His selfish ways are quickly modified by the discipline of his teachers and intercourse with his companions. As a rule, however, his character is not radically altered by school life. Selfishness is only suppressed by force of circumstances which do not admit of an unrestricted gratification of his wishes, amidst the opposition of numerous other wills, equally selfish and determined. Superficially, a boy's manner and habit of life are much modified and improved by school routine. As soon, however, as the constraints of school life are removed what becomes of such virtues which depend, not upon a trained will, but upon forces external to the child? His actions have been controlled by others, but it does not follow that he has learnt to be master of himself. The tree has fruit on it, making a fair show, but the fruit is not of a natural growth, like oranges tied on a Christmas tree. On the contrary, there arises in the boy's mind a double standard of conduct. The one is the life he must lead while under the superintendence of his parents, pastors, and masters, and the other that which he intends to lead as soon as he is emancipated from their control. He develops thus a double self, one of which is conventional, orderly, and often manly and attractive in the eyes of his elders and betters, including his parents; while for the other self, its existence is best known to himself, for he takes care to confide a knowledge of it to no one else. I should say that the whole secret of true education, as distinguished from partial and false education, lies in the avoidance of this dichotomy or division of the child's self, under the influence of firm external control.

I should say that he is the chief of educators who can succeed in so educating a child that he grows up with a

single self, and is in his heart of hearts just the same as he is seen moving among his fellow men.

Let me consider for a moment the development of this double self. To begin with, it is far from necessary to distinguish the two selves in one person, as though one were more real than the other, or to think that the conventional behaviour is due to a sort of fictitious self, while in the pursuit of his own pleasure, during the absence of conventional hindrances, the boy or man reveals himself as he really is. Neither can the phenomenon of the double self be adequately explained by ascribing it to mere hypocrisy. The character of Pecksniff is that of the typical hypocrite, but public records seem to give us examples of men who have lived consistent lives of opposite characters, honest in one set of surroundings, perhaps their home, while in other surroundings, perhaps their business, persistently dishonest.

It seems that a man may grow up like a musical box which can play two quite different tunes, the one independent of the other, and each quite complete in itself. Circumstances determine which tune shall be played at any given moment.

I believe that it is not an unusual thing for parents and teachers to train only a part of the child; that is to say, their guidance and control reach only certain divisions of his whole nature. Much is left untouched by their attention, and this develops by itself, good seed and weeds mixed together. The curious result is that there arrives a period in the child's life when they find that the character which they believe themselves to have thoroughly understood, appears suddenly in a new light and proves an insoluble puzzle. How large a share of his life has been independent of their influence often remains a secret to parents till their son has left school, and becomes free from external control. What has made him suddenly idle, worthless, extravagant, and a victim of the mischievous influence of bad company? The one parent accuses the other of being too strict or too lax in control, and an attempt may be made on the part of both together to come to a serious understanding with the young man. The result of this, however, often ends, not in reconciliation between parents and child, but only in the final surcease of filial respect. Occasionally the opposite happens, and children, unknown to their parents, have developed for themselves a hidden character of the highest quality; and it is the occurrence of such cases

which seems to justify Rousseau, the father of modern educational principles, who taught us that over-interference with the child is a mistake. If the child wants to put his finger in the candle flame, let him. He will burn his fingers, and won't do it again. If children do not respond to the sound of the dinner-bell, let them go without their dinner, and they will learn punctuality. If they want to eat a surfeit of jam, let them; they will be ill, and excess will bring its own punishment. I do not think this principle, whose advocates perhaps parody rather than represent Rousseau, is rational, although it may be attended with partial success. It is the training of kittens and puppies, and not moral training at all. The truth is that, by aid of firmness and common sense, good behaviour, of a conventional kind, may be readily and successfully established. But the really important thing is, what thoughts are continually passing through the child's mind? Is the child learning to think what the effect of his conduct will be, from moment to moment, on those with whom he lives, or is the talk, which he has with those older than himself, always trivial and limited in range? Is his reason for avoiding excess simply the experience that it produces inconvenience? If the only motives for being good ever set before him are avoidance of pain or acquisition of pleasure, is not his behaviour apt to be conventional, and does not conventional behaviour cease in many cases as soon as the society which establishes it is changed? It is true I have heard of a man who, living alone in the swamps of India, always dressed himself for dinner in English evening dress clothes, but I regard him as an exception. The Englishman abroad, in the absence of the ubiquitous Mrs. Grundy, has often a different standard of conduct from his countryman, and from himself at home.

Force external to the child will serve to establish good habits, but these are liable to be short-lived, as morning dew in the dog days, unless someone manages to train him so that he may learn to look from earliest years beyond himself, and beyond the effect of his own actions upon himself. Good habits, based upon the execution of strict orders, are not by themselves a complete education. I think that where possible the real reason of a given command should be explained to the child. Make as little difference as you can between the way in which you treat a child and the way in which you treat a grown-up

person. Do not impose on the child by reason of his weakness; do not overwhelm him by your authority. The Bishop of Peterborough condemns Laud for treating the public as children, and saying in effect—"Do as I tell you and you will see the reason afterwards," "a command," the Bishop observes, "which Englishmen do not readily obey." But the truth is neither do children. As, however, the reason of an order cannot always be explained, sometimes for want of time, sometimes because it is beyond his comprehension, it is necessary to cherish a spirit of trusting confident obedience in the child. Unfortunately there is much trouble for parents involved in this matter, for when unreasonable orders are given, or when they are mistaken and prove to the detriment of the child, his faith in his parent is shaken. To expect implicit obedience in the child is to set up a very high standard of watchfulness, prudence and self-control in the parent. If thoughtless orders are given, or such as tend to the convenience of the parent rather than the welfare of the child, the useful doctrine of implicit obedience breaks down. The child notes the insincerity of the parent, and assimilates his conduct to that which he observes.

Still, it is probable that much imperfect bringing up is due to the hesitation which many sensitive people feel when, they have to impress or impose their will on others, even very young children. In evading this difficulty they resort to a variety of indirect methods, which are liable to do more harm than good. Of these a common form is correction by comparison. "Do not call nurse a nasty cross old thing; you never hear Teddie Brown talk so to his nurse." "Oh!" replies the reprovéd one, "yesterday he kicked at his nurse and called her a brute." Again, mother says, "I cannot buy you a puff dart; the point might fly in your sister's eye and blind her. Besides, your cousin Jack's mamma never bought him such a dangerous toy." "Oh! but at Christmas she bought Jack a bow and some arrows." Let the mother have the courage to say "No," when she has made up her mind that "no" is reasonable. Then again there are those who seem to think any remark is good enough to put off the momentary difficulties of dealing with a child. They make promises, for instance, and break them. "If you are quiet, Bob, for the next half-hour, I will buy you a wooden horse." Bobby fulfils his part of the contract, while mamma forgets all about hers. "Give me those scissors and I

will cut you out such a pretty paper cart." Bobby gives up the scissors, and mother says, "Now, you shall not play with these scissors any more," and the paper cart is never produced. "Here, drink this; it is so nice." Bobby gulps down some repulsive physic. These tricks may succeed for the moment. Bobby may for a time be deceived for his good as it appears, but in reality Bobby takes quiet note that his lessons on truthfulness, in word and deed, must be taken with a little mental reserve. Children are very reflective. They brood over incidents of control which their parents instantly forget. They pursue trains of reasoning in speculations, ethical and metaphysical, which are quite surprising to grown-up people, who mostly trouble themselves but little with ultimate truths, or logical consistency in their conduct. Bobby, however, though his treatment has been manifestly unfair, bears no malice. He soon sees that his mother meant to be good-natured. Nevertheless he acquires fresh material for building up a second self. He learns readily to do as he is done by, and to deceive others as he has been himself deceived.

It is said that untruthful habits are at their maximum of development in children between four and five years old. Perhaps this is because up to that time they are themselves specially subject to deception.

(To be continued.)